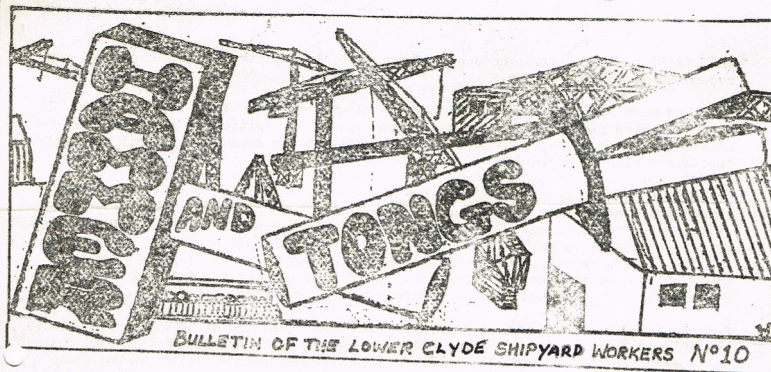


AMT's on Thursday at 11.0 a.m. Pick up the bulletin
+ sell them at the canteen.

T/500/6/7/27

12.0 m + 12.45 a.m.



FIGHT REDUNDANCIES

(2P)

With British Shipbuilders rationalisation scheme for the Scott - Lithgow group, the closure of Cowal Engineering, Gartdyke Yard and Scotts Engine Shop looks inevitable, and this will probably mean redundancies for workers with in the group.

The time has finally come for us to start organising ourselves in order to prevent any future redundancies from taking place - whether it is one thousand men or one man makes no difference. We have seen workers get laid off from Lamonts and the Dry Dock without any real struggle taking place within those establishments, let alone within the Scott - Lithgow group as a whole.

One of the reasons for this, was the methods that were used i.e., lobbies to parliament, consultations with M.P.s and people like the local provost, along with every other scallywag that one can think of. This was proved useless because the fight was never put into the hands of the entire work force in the group. Consulting with M.P.s and provosts etc. as a method of fighting, is no more than an act of "necrophilia" (having sexual intercourse with a corpse) and will always lead to defeat for workers.

So, what is to be done? We must start by getting it into our heads, that redundancies are just not going to be acceptable to any worker! Regardless

what his job may be, or what his colour his union card may be. Also, the time to start organising and preparing ourselves for the future that lies ahead is now! And this we must do by ourselves, because there is no one else capable of doing it for us.

We must not, at any time, rely on or have faith in national and local politicians, political parties, or the unions for that matter as they have always identified themselves with governments and employers. These people are no friends of the working class. Whatever we decide to do, we must do by ourselves and be sure that we are masters of our own destiny. If we don't, we'll surely be defeated.

Regular mass meetings are necessary at this stage in time. Not only within our separate

yards, but mass meetings of all workers in the group, so that we can all have the opportunity to discuss methods



(continued over -

and tactics which will be necessary for a properly organised struggle against any redundancies that may occur.

Also, we must keep the fight in our own hands at shop floor level at all times. It is on the shop floor that we are in our most powerful position to prevent redundancies from taking place, because it is here that all our communication and collective decision making is strongest.

It will be of the utmost importance for all workers to know in advance what will be expected of them in the event of redundancy notices being issued. The acceptance of redundancy notices must be rejected by every worker in the group. All redundancy notices should be gathered in and destroyed en masse. It will also be necessary for all workers to remain in their places of employment and be prepared to occupy every section of the Scott-Lithgow group should the company persist in making workers redundant. Also, we must even be prepared to lock out management.

Redundancies must be fought with a policy of "direct action" if we are to be effective in our struggle against redundancies. By using "direct action" we are enforcing our demands on the company, it is not an act of petitioning a mediating authority to plead our cause. Authority resides in the power of controlling production - those who run it have. "Direct action" will prove to be one of our strongest weapons.

It is also important for us to spread all our future activities over as wide a field as possible. This can be done by contacting the workers in other yards up and down the country who are facing similar problems. By contacting workers in other areas, we can organise meetings of shop floor delegates with the view to co-ordinating all our actions collectively in the fight against redundancies.

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REGARDING THE E.S.V.

At a time when the spectre of unemployment looms menacingly over the Lower Reaches it may seem strange that the workers' at the Lithgow end of the group have submitted a claim to the management for an increase in wages. The fight against redundancies is a struggle to secure a comfortable future for the workers in the area; but is it not true to say that by securing higher wages we are also helping to provide for the future.

This article sets out to explain the reasons behind the claim and to examine the best possible way of achieving a successful outcome.

When the management announced that they had secured the contract to build an Emergency Support Vessel for B.P. the workforce began to discuss the potential of the craft and came to the conclusion that as it was related to the North Sea oil industry it therefore merited comparable wages to those paid in construction sites related to that industry.

Despite mutterings from Mr. Belch about closing the yards and not paying a cent more, the Boilermakers' shop stewards in Kingston/Glen blacked the job with support from the Confed stewards and put a claim to him for an increase of 75p per hour. A meeting took place in the Kingston boardroom on Friday 16th Feb. and Belch as expected refused to pay a penny. He argued that the order was not oil related and instead of asking for more money we should go on our knees and thank God that we have him to give us a job. Needless to say the meeting concluded in "failure to agree".

After a meeting of boilermakers' stewards on the following Monday a meeting of all Kingston/Glen stewards was held on the Tuesday where it was decided to pursue the

claim through recognised procedure.

This resulted in a meeting between the shop stewards and the local full-time officials viz; Bro. Robb (Boilermakers') Bro. McKee (AUEW) and Bro. McLaughlin (GMAU). This was held in the Lithgow club on Friday Feb 23rd where a heated discussion took place. The officials argued that the way ahead lay in a 12^{1/2} productivity scheme similar to that operated in Govan. When this was rejected by shop stewards a compromise was reached whereby the said delegates would report the claim to the district confed emergency committee for their perusal. That meeting took place on the following Tuesday in Glasgow and a report back meeting was called for Friday March 2nd.

The Emergency Committee did not support our claim for 75p and suggested that we go along with the recommendations of the local full-time officials. After another heated debate two proposals were placed before the meeting. One to allow the officials to pursue the claim and the other to ask the officials to leave and re-convene a S.S. meeting in their absence. Good sense prevailed, the officials were asked to leave and a S.S. meeting was called for Monday morning.

Unfortunately, as workers those of us involved in this bulletin have to produce it at weekends so we can't wait for the outcome of that meeting but can only assume that the decision made on Friday means that we must go it alone.

It may seem that the argument is supported whole-heartedly by shop stewards but this is not the case. Some shop steward have no faith whatsoever in the workforce and are willing to succumb to the pressures of the full-time officials. Therefore it is important that we fight the policies of the traitors within the S.S. movement as well.

"How will we win this fight?" they ask. Will we have the support of the workforce and do we have the bargaining power which other sections of the working class possess at this point in time."

Of course we have power! must be the answer.

To close the yard would be disastrous for Port Glasgow and the government cannot afford another ghost town on the Clyde. The threat of closure has been hanging over many our plants but that doesn't deter these workers from fighting and winning higher wages.

Above all we can win the fight through our own determination and faith in ourselves. That the E.S.V. is oil-related is beyond a shadow of a doubt. In British Shipbuilders Annual Report for 1977/78 Michael Gasey the Chief Executive says: "A sector of particular importance is the building and conversion of vessels and structure for offshore exploration and extraction". He goes on to say: "Substantial efforts in the offshore market have recently been rewarded by significant contracts including an Emergency Support Vessel for B.P...." This was printed in the paragraph headed Offshore Operations and not under Shipbuilding. Why?

The job must remain blacked and if it is a confrontation Belch wants then so be it.

In the event of strike action it is of the utmost importance that as many workers as possible are involved in the day to day running of the strike including picketting and in shop-floor committees who should be in control of the strike. It would be folly to allow a strike to be controlled entirely by the S.S. committee as some of them don't believe in the claim.

Above all at no time should we entertain Union officials. It is significant that advocate parity of wages with Govan now. What about the parity claim when we were £12 behind U.C.S. They forced the Shop Stewards into dropping that claim.

Finally, if we lose this fight we will probably never get a decent standard of living. The time has come for the talking to stop. The only way to get higher wages is to

fight for them. Hopefully the day has come when Scott-Lithgow workers are no longer prepared to play second fiddle to anybody and the term "Yellow River" disappears from the vocabulary.
Are we nice or men?...

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THE CASE FOR THE 35 HOUR WEEK

One of the key weapons in the fight to maintain jobs and to reduce unemployment is the demand for a reduction in the working week. Even according to the Dept. of Employment's cautious estimates, a cut to 35 hours in the basic working week would reduce unemployment by "anywhere between 100,000 and 500,000". Trade union estimates are that the 35 hour week could create up to 750,000 jobs and save thousands of millions of pounds in unemployment and social security benefits.

Everyone has heard about the technological revolution which may lie round the corner with the development of Silicon "Chips"; if the benefits of this prospect alone, are to come to the people, and not to mean a massive increase in unemployment, then this requires a big step up in the campaign for the 35 hour week, for more educational time, longer holidays, increase spending on social services, cultural and recreational facilities.

It is high time that workers gained more time off, to enjoy life outside the workplace more, in the family and the community, and to play a greater part in the running of affairs. As industrial life becomes more intensified, problems of stress increase, and new hazards to health and safety arise. The T.U.C. has been forced to take up the 35 hr issue more vigorously because of events (it was first adopted in 1972) and it is being promoted on a wider scale by the European T.U. confederation. There have been successes in Belgium and elsewhere and by workers in Multinational firms which also operate in Britain. Of course, employers are opposed to a reduction in the working week without loss of pay, although they don't mind stopping you working altogether, and of course there is the tale that it will mean more overtime working. Well, according to the T.U.C. research unit, the reduction of the "normal" week over the past 20 years from 44 to 40 hours, has resulted in a 3½ cut in actual hours worked since the mid 1950's.

The shorter working week with no loss of earnings will provide more leisure, produce a healthier workforce, - with less demands on the N.H.S. will mean more jobs, especially for youth, and a higher hourly rate of pay. Clearly if overtime is to be cut, the basic rate must be increased, in order that earnings be maintained. The demand for the 35 hour week must be pressed now to the utmost. Although it is T.U.C. policy, and resolutions are a step in the right direction, bitter experience shows that these are only a start and must be implemented, clearly we in the shipbuilding industry have a special interest to take up the demand for the 35 hr week in the struggle to defeat the plans for redundancies; alongside the points on scrap and build, British ships built in British yards, etc. It will depend very much, on the level we campaign for these demands, whether or not community and industrial life in this local area, of Greenock, Port Glasgow and Gourock survives, and prospers.

Craneman.
Robert Hunter, S.S. Scott's